

Amendments to the Specification:

Please add the following paragraphs under the Brief Description of the Drawings, following page 1, line 30.

Fig. 4 is an exemplary gaming device according to one embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 5A is an example of a basic game with a basic game outcome and a bonus game ready to receive the basic game outcome indicia.

Fig. 5B is an example of a continuation of the gaming session of Fig. 5A showing a second basic game outcome and a bonus game partially completed by the basic game outcome of Fig. 5A.

Fig. 5C is an example of a continuation of the gaming session of Fig. 5B showing a third basic game outcome and a bonus game further partially completed by the basic game outcome of Fig. 5B.

Fig. 5D is an example of a continuation of the gaming session of Fig. 5C showing a bonus game completed by the basic game outcome of Fig. 5C.

Fig. 6A is an example of a game with a randomly selected indicium for random contribution into the game matrix to develop a game outcome.

Fig. 6B is an example of a continuation of the gaming session of Fig. 6A showing the indicium of Fig. 6A contributed to the game matrix.

Fig. 6C is an example of a continuation of the gaming session of Fig. 6B showing a randomly selected indicium and the matrix reformed through the deletion of symbols in one row of the game matrix.

Fig. 6D is an example of a continuation of the gaming session of Fig. 6C showing the indicium selected in Fig. 6C contributed to the game matrix.

Fig. 7 is a flow chart illustrating, in one embodiment, the process of using any number of basic game outcomes to populate a bonus game with indicia from the basic games.

Fig. 8 is a flow chart illustrating, in one embodiment, the process of using a finite series of basic game outcomes to populate a bonus game with indicia from the basic games.

Please replace the paragraph at page 3, line 22 with the following amended paragraph:

Game Device, Gaming Device: Any electrical, mechanical, or electro-mechanical device that, in a manner well known in the art, accepts wagers, steps through a process to determine an outcome, and pays winnings based on the outcome. The outcome may be randomly generated, as with a slot machine; may be generated through a combination of randomness and player skill, as with video poker; or may be generated entirely through player skill. Gaming devices may include slot machines (both video and mechanical reels), video poker machines, video blackjack machines, video roulette machines, video keno machines, video bingo machines, pachinko machines, video lottery terminals, handheld gaming devices, and the like (e.g., as shown in Fig. 4 in one embodiment).

Please replace the paragraph at page 4, line 19 with the following amended paragraph:

Outcomes: The results of gaming events that may be used in determining payout or bonus payout eligibility. Outcomes may be associated with (i) individual symbols that independently can be used to determine payout eligibility (e.g., a single cherry symbol outcome yields a payout), and/or (ii) a combination of individual symbols that are used to determine payout or bonus payout eligibility (e.g., a cherry-cherry-cherry outcome in a basic slot machine game, or the aggregation of 3 three cherries in a meta-game). Other example outcomes include a push in blackjack and a flush in video poker. Different types of gaming devices may have widely varying types of outcomes. Several are

described in detail herein and still others will be apparent to those of skill in the art based on the present disclosure.

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

Player Tracking Card: Most casinos issue plastic or paper cards (resembling frequent shopper cards) to players as a way of identifying the player at a slot machine or table game. As is well known in the art, such cards typically have encoded thereon (in machine-readable and/or and / or human readable form) a player identifier (e.g., a six digit number) which uniquely identifies the player (e.g., because the number is associated with a record in a database that includes corresponding player information). At a slot machine, the player inserts the card into a reader device and the player identifier is read from the card, most often magnetically. From the player identifier which the reader device reads, the corresponding player information may in turn be read from the database, typically via a network connection between the reader device and a device hosting the database.

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment, an outcome is randomly determined and a random position at which to display the outcome in a display matrix is determined as well. For example, a game with a popcorn-theme is contemplated. A popcorn icon is communicated to the player (e.g., displayed via a display device 600 as shown in Fig. 6A). An outcome is randomly determined in a known manner, and a determination is made as to whether the outcome qualifies the player for a payout, an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 6A. The popcorn icon incorporates a symbol 625 representing the outcome, (e.g., a cherry symbol), or is visually replaced by or transformed into a symbol (e.g., a cherry symbol). The gaming device and/or controller then randomly determines where in a display matrix 620 to place the symbol 625 an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 6B. Once a position is determined for the symbol 625, the symbol may be visually transferred to the determined position in the display matrix (e.g., along a path from a starting position 610

to the determined position). For example, if a popcorn icon is transformed into a cherry symbol, the cherry symbol may then be moved visually to the determined area on a game display matrix 620. Thus, as subsequent outcomes are similarly determined and placed as illustrated in Fig. 6C, the combination of the accumulated outcomes may be used to determine a player's eligibility for a bonus payout as illustrated in Fig. 6D. For example, if three cherries are collected in the same row of a display matrix, a bonus payout may result.

Please replace the paragraph at page 6, line 7 with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment, an outcome is determined randomly, and a determination is made based on stored rules as to where to display the outcome in a display matrix with reference to a previously displayed outcome. In an example of such an embodiment, a popcorn-themed game is contemplated in which a popcorn icon is communicated to a player via a display device as depicted in Fig. 5A. An outcome 510 is randomly determined and a determination is made as to whether the outcome qualifies the player for a payout. The popcorn icon incorporates a symbol representing the outcome, such as a cherry symbol, or is visually replaced by or transformed into a symbol. The gaming device and/or controller then determines where in a display matrix 530 to place the symbol based on stored rules that consider the position of at least one previously placed symbol in the display matrix 530. For example, stored rules may dictate that: (1) subsequently generated symbols cannot replace previously generated symbols in a display matrix, and (2) unless occupied by other previously generated symbols, symbols should be placed in the row position closest to similar, previously-generated symbols in the display matrix (e.g., cherry symbols should be placed as close as possible to other cherry symbols, and in the same row of the matrix). Once a visual position is determined for the symbol 525, the symbol is visually transferred to the determined position in the display matrix 530 as shown in Fig. 5B. For example, once a popcorn icon is transformed into a cherry symbol, the cherry symbol is then visually moved to the determined area on a game display. Thus, the combined effect of the accumulated outcomes as shown in Fig. 5C may be used to determine a player's eligibility for a bonus

payout. For example, if three cherries are collected in the same row of a display matrix, a bonus payout may result as shown in Fig. 5D.

Please replace the paragraph at page 8, line 7 with the following amended paragraph:

Communication between the devices and the computer, and among the devices, may be direct or indirect, such as over the Internet through a Web site maintained by computer on a remote server or over an on-line data network including commercial on-line service providers, bulletin board systems and the like. In yet other embodiments, the devices may communicate with one another and/or and/or the computer over RF, cable TV, satellite links and the like.

Please replace the paragraph at page 8, line 27 with the following amended paragraph:

In an embodiment, a server computer may not be necessary and/or and/or preferred. For example, the present invention may, in one or more embodiments, be practiced on a stand-alone gaming device and/or and/or a gaming device in communication only with one or more other gaming devices. In such an embodiment, any functions described as performed by the computer or data described as stored on the computer may instead be performed by or stored on one or more gaming devices.

Please replace the paragraph at page 9, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to Fig. 2, a gaming device 200 comprises a processor 210, such as one or more Intel® Pentium® processors. The processor is operable to communicate with a random number generator, which may be a component of the gaming device. The processor may instead include a random number generator (*e.g.*, hardware or software). The random number generator, in accordance with at least one embodiment of the present invention, may generate data representing random or pseudo-random values (referred to as “random numbers” herein). The random number generator may generate a random number, for example, every predetermined unit of time (*e.g.*, every thousandth of a

second) or in response to an initiation of a game on the gaming device. In the former embodiment, the generated random numbers may be used as they are generated (e.g., the random number generated at substantially the time of game initiation is used for that game) and/or and/or stored for future use. A random number generated by the random number generator may be used by the processor to determine, for example, at least one of an outcome and payout. A random number generator, as used herein, may be embodied as a processor separate from but working in cooperation with the processor. Alternatively, the random number generator may be embodied as an algorithm, program component, or software stored in the memory of the gaming device and used to generate a random number.

Please replace the paragraph at page 10, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

The processor may also be operable to communicate with a benefit output device, which may be a component of the gaming device. The benefit output device may comprise one or more devices for outputting a benefit to a player of the gaming device. For example, in one embodiment the gaming device may provide coins and/or and/or tokens as a benefit. In such an embodiment the benefit output device may comprise a hopper 220 and hopper controller, for dispensing coins and/or and/or tokens into a coin tray of the gaming device in a known manner. In another example, the gaming device may provide a receipt or other document on which there is printed an indication of a benefit (e.g., a cashless gaming receipt that has printed thereon a monetary value, which is redeemable for cash in the amount of the monetary value). In such an embodiment the benefit output device may comprise a printing and document dispensing mechanism, as is known in the art. In yet another example, the gaming device may provide electronic credits as a benefit (which, e.g., may be subsequently converted to coins and/or and/or tokens and dispensed from a hopper into a coin tray). In such an embodiment the benefit output device may comprise a credit meter balance and/or and/or a processor that manages the amount of electronic credits that are indicated on a display of a credit meter balance. In yet another example, the gaming device may credit a monetary amount to a financial account associated with a player as a benefit provided to a player. The

financial account may be, for example, a credit card account, a debit account, a charge account, a checking account, or a casino account. In such an embodiment the benefit output device may comprise a device for communicating with a server on which the financial account is maintained and/or and/or a card reader 230.

Please replace the paragraph at page 11, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

The processor is also operable to communicate with a display device 240, which may be a component of the gaming device. The display device may comprise, for example, one or more display screens or areas for outputting information related to game play on the gaming device, such as a cathode ray tube (CRT) monitor, liquid crystal display (LCD) screen, or light emitting diode (LED) screen. In one or more embodiments, a gaming device may comprise more than one display device. For example, a gaming device may comprise an LCD display for displaying electronic reels and a display area that displays rotating mechanical reels.

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, line 11 with the following amended paragraph:

The display device may comprise, for example, one or more display areas. For example, one of the display areas (e.g., a primary game screen) may display outcomes of games played on the gaming device (e.g., electronic reels of a gaming device). Another of the display areas (e.g., a secondary game screen) may display rules for playing a game of the gaming device. Yet another of the display areas may display the benefits obtainable by playing a game of the gaming device (e.g., in the form of a payout table). In one or more embodiments, the gaming device may include more than one display device, one or more other output devices, or a combination thereof (e.g., two display devices and two audio speakers).

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

The processor may also be in communication with an input device 250, which is a device that is capable of receiving an input (e.g., from a player or another device) and which may be a component of the gaming device. An input device may communicate with or be part of another device (e.g., a server, a gaming device, etc.). Some examples of input devices include: a bar-code scanner, a magnetic stripe reader, a computer keyboard or keypad, a button, a handle, a keypad, a touch screen ~~touch screen~~, a microphone, an infrared sensor, a voice recognition module, a coin or bill acceptor, a sonic ranger, a computer port, a video camera, a motion detector, a digital camera, a network card, a universal serial bus (USB) port, a GPS receiver, a radio frequency identification (RFID) receiver, an RF receiver, a thermometer, a pressure sensor, an infrared port (e.g., for receiving communications from a second gaming device or from a another device such as a smart card or PDA of a player), and a weight scale. For gaming devices, common input devices include a button or touch screen on a video poker machine, a lever or handle connected to the gaming device, a magnetic stripe reader to read a player tracking card inserted into a gaming device, a touch screen for input of player selections during game play, and a coin and bill acceptor 260.

Please replace the paragraph at page 13, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

The processor may also be in communication with a payment system, which may be a component of the gaming device. The payment system is a device capable of accepting payment from a player (e.g., a bet or initiation of a balance) and/or ~~and/or~~ providing payment to a player (e.g., a payout). Payment is not limited to money, but may also include other types of consideration, including products, services, and alternate currencies. Exemplary methods of accepting payment by the payment system include (i) receiving hard currency (i.e., coins or bills), and accordingly the payment system may comprise a coin or bill acceptor; (ii) receiving an alternate currency (e.g., a paper cashless gaming voucher, a coupon, a non-negotiable token), and accordingly the payment system

may comprise a bar code reader or other sensing means; (iii) receiving a payment identifier (*e.g.*, a credit card number, a debit card number, a player tracking card number) and debiting the account identified by the payment identifier; and (iv) determining that a player has performed a value-added activity (*e.g.*, participating in surveys, monitoring remote images for security purposes, referring friends to the casino).

Please replace the paragraph at page 15, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

According to an embodiment of the present invention, the instructions of the program may be read into a main memory from another computer-readable medium, such from a ROM. The execution of sequences of the program instructions in program causes the processor to perform the process steps described herein. In alternate embodiments, hard-wired circuitry may be used in place of, or in combination with, software instructions for implementation of the processes described herein. Thus, embodiments of the present invention are not limited to any specific combination of hardware and software. As discussed with respect to aforementioned systems, execution of sequences of the instructions in a program of a peripheral device in communication with the gaming device may also cause the processor to perform some of the process steps described herein.

Please replace the paragraph at page 16, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

Further, where appropriate, a prior art payout database may be utilized in the performance of the inventive processes described herein. A payout database may be stored in the data storage device in tabular form, or any other appropriate database form, as is well known in the art. The data stored therein includes a number of example records or entries, each defining an outcome that may be obtained on a gaming device that corresponds to a payout. Those skilled in the art will understand that the payout database may include any number of entries. The tabular representation also defines fields for each of the entries or records. The fields specify: (i) an outcome, which indicates the one or more indicia comprising a given outcome; and (ii) a payout that corresponds to each

respective outcome. The outcomes may be those obtained on a three-reel ~~three-reel~~ slot machine.

Please replace the paragraph at page 17, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

Note that, although these databases may be described as being stored in a gaming device, in other embodiments some or all of these databases may be partially or wholly stored in another device, such as one or more of the peripheral devices, the peripheral device server and / or the server computer. Further, some or all of the data described as being stored in the databases may be partially or wholly stored (in addition to or in lieu of being stored in the memory of the gaming device) in a memory of one or more other devices, such as one or more of the peripheral devices, another gaming device, the peripheral device server and/or ~~and/or~~ the computer.

Please replace the paragraph at page 18, line 29 with the following amended paragraph:

The slot machine may further comprise a credit meter balance, which is an exemplary embodiment of a benefit output device that was described herein. The credit meter balance reflects the amount of electronic credits currently available to a player. The electronic credits may be used by a player, for example, as wagers for games played on the gaming device. The electronic credits may also be “cashed out” as coins, bills, tokens, a cashless gaming receipt, and/or ~~and/or~~ credits to another financial account associated with the player.

Please replace the paragraph at page 19, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

Finally, the slot machine may comprise a coin tray. Payment to the player may be rendered by dispensing coins into the coin tray. Such coins may be dispensed based on, for example, a player’s indication that the player would like to cash out his credit meter balance and/or ~~and/or~~ a payout obtained by a player as a result of playing a game on the slot machine. The coin tray is an exemplary embodiment of the benefit output device,

described herein. Note that, where appropriate, the slot machine may include different and/or and / or additional components besides those discussed in this section.

Please replace the paragraph at page 19, line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

Following is a description of process steps to be performed by (i) a gaming device, (ii) a controller, (iii) devices operatively connected to gaming devices and/or controllers (e.g., retrofitted hardware devices), and (iv) any combination thereof. Thus, although the following description discusses the steps as performed by a gaming device, it contemplated that the steps may be performed by any combination of the devices and computers (e.g., a central server) described herein.

Please replace the paragraph at page 19, line 27 with the following amended paragraph:

A game that may be initiated may constitute a basic game and/or a meta-game. Further, a player may purchase a single handle pull Fig. 7 or a prepaid session Fig. 8. Turning to Fig. 8, a process flowchart 800 illustrates the game play mechanic of a prepaid gaming session with a finite number of basic game outcomes and Fig. 7 is a process flow chart 700 illustrating the game play mechanic with an undefined number of game outcomes (both types of game play mechanics will be described together in the following description.) Thus, a player may initiate play of a basic game and a meta-game through the purchase of a single handle pull, in which case additional symbols for use in the meta-game could be collected through the purchase of additional handle pulls in step 705 through step 740. Or, a player may initiate play of both a basic game and a meta-game through the purchase of a prepaid session as shown in Fig. 8 in step 805, in which case individual outcomes may yield payouts, and aggregated symbols may be collected (through placement of such symbols in a display matrix) throughout the session to step 830 and be used to determine bonus payout eligibility. Further, a player may initiate play of a meta-game through the purchase of a prepaid session, in which case a basic game may not be simultaneously initiated (i.e., only a bonus payout can be awarded through a combination of aggregated symbols).

Please replace the paragraph at page 20, line 22 with the following amended paragraph:

Once a game is initiated, the game device randomly determines an outcome or plurality of outcomes, as described herein. For example, a single outcome may result from a handle pull in step 710, or a plurality of outcomes may result upon the initiation of a prepaid session in step 810, such as, for example, in an embodiment where a prepaid session initiates a popcorn-themed meta-game whereby a plurality of outcomes are determined.

Please replace the paragraph at page 20, line 28 with the following amended paragraph:

In some embodiments, determination of an outcome or outcomes at this step can be accompanied by a determination of payout eligibility in step 715, or alternatively, in step 815. For example, in an embodiment where a prepaid session as shown in Fig. 8 initiates a popcorn-themed meta-game comprising a plurality of outcomes, each individual outcome may potentially yield a payout in step 820, or in Fig. 7, in a basic game a handle pull may result in a payout in step 720.

Please replace the paragraph at page 21, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

Symbols corresponding to the outcomes are determined. As described herein, outcomes may be associated with (i) individual symbols that independently can be used to determine payout eligibility (e.g., a single cherry symbol outcome yields a payout), and/or (ii) a plurality of individual symbols that are used to determine payout or bonus payout eligibility (e.g., a cherry-cherry-cherry outcome in a basic slot machine game, or the aggregation of three 3-cherries in a meta-game). For example, in various embodiments described herein, a single outcome may correspond to a single symbol. In another embodiment, a single outcome may correspond to multiple symbols.

Please replace the paragraph at page 21, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

Once symbols are determined, a determination is made as to where to position such symbols in a display matrix in step 725, or alternatively, in step 825. In one embodiment, this determination is made randomly.

Please replace the paragraph at page 21, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

In another embodiment, this determination is made based on rules that consider the position of previously-accumulated symbols. For example, stored rules (e.g., which are retrievable by the processor from a data storage device) may dictate that: (1) subsequently generated symbols cannot replace previously generated symbols in a display matrix; (2) unless occupied by other previously generated symbols, symbols should be placed in the row position closest to similar, previously-generated symbols in the display matrix (e.g., cherry symbols should be placed as close as possible to other cherry symbols, and in the same row of the matrix); and/or (3) symbols should be situated in the matrix so as to provide the player with the maximum payout (i.e., symbols should be combined according to stored rules in a way that maximizes payouts).

Please replace the paragraph at page 22, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

In the third embodiment, this determination is made based on a previous determination of a multi-symbol outcome. In this embodiment, a multi-symbol outcome (e.g., “cherry-bar-plum”) is initially determined in Steps 2 and/or 3. Then, in this step of the process (Step 4), the originally determined multi-symbol outcome configuration is retrieved from memory so that the system can determine where in the display matrix to visually place the individual components of the multi-symbol outcome.

Please replace the paragraph at page 23, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

Once at least two symbols are placed in the display matrix, a determination is made as to bonus payout eligibility in step 730, or alternatively, 835. To determine bonus

payout eligibility, a stored set of rules may be retrieved from a database or otherwise referenced from a memory. Such stored rules may indicate the various payouts that are to be awarded to the player for the various combinations of the various symbols that were placed in the display matrix previously. For example, stored rules may indicate that: (1) three pear symbols occurring in a single row of a display matrix yields two points, (2) three cherry symbols occurring on a single row of a display matrix yields three points, (3) a diagonal line of three cherry symbols occurring anywhere on the display matrix yields five points, and (4) a total of 50 points in a game session qualifies the player for a \$200 bonus payout. Alternatively, individual combinations of symbols may directly yield bonus payouts. For example, three cherry symbols occurring on a single row may yield a bonus payout of \$5.

Please replace the paragraph at page 23, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

Once payout eligibility is determined, a payout may be actuated at the gaming device in a manner known in the art in step 735, or alternatively, in step 840. For example, an appropriate amount of coins may be dispensed into a coin tray.

Please replace the paragraph at page 23, line 24 with the following amended paragraph:

In some embodiments, a scrolling matrix may be employed, and may optionally be communicated to the player as a "conveyor belt" an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 6C and 6D. A scrolling matrix would function to institute a time limit associated with accumulated outcomes, such that if a given row of a matrix is not filled by the necessary complementary symbols by the time the row disappears from the screen, the player would lose any accumulated symbols in that row. The expiration of aggregated symbols in a meta-game is explained in detail in Applicant's (i) U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 10/772,837, entitled "Electronic Amusement Device and Method for Enhanced Slot Machine Play", filed February 5, 2004, (ii) U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 10/778,576, entitled "METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ENHANCED PLAY OF A GAMING DEVICE", filed February 13, 2004, and (iii) co-pending U.S. Patent

Application Serial Number 09/716,918, entitled "Electronic Amusement Device and Method for Enhanced Slot Machine Play", filed November 20, 2000, which is a continuation in part of U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 09/164473, entitled "Electronic Amusement Device and Method for Enhancing Slot Machine Play", filed October 1, 1998, and issued on March 20, 2001 as U.S. Patent No. 6,203,430. The entirety of each of the above applications and patents is incorporated herein by reference.